

# interpretations

a newsletter for Arizona's educational interpreters

Fall 2004

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## New Interpreter Qualifications Implemented

### *The Arizona Department of Education Establishes Qualification Requirements for Educational Interpreters*

It's official! The long-awaited qualification requirements for educational interpreters have been approved. View the entire document at Braille Literacy and Educational Interpreters (5.21.04 R7-2-407, -610, -620) <http://www.ade.state.az.us/stateboard/rulepackages.asp>. Section R7-2-620, printed here in its entirety, applies specifically to educational interpreters. This is a step in the right direction to ensure that students who are deaf or hard of hearing have quality access to education through interpreters.

### **Qualifications for Educational Interpreters for the Hearing Impaired R7-2-620 Qualification Requirements of Professional, Non-Teaching School Personnel**

#### **A. Definitions:**

1. "Educational Interpreter." For the purposes of this section, "educational interpreter" means a person trained to translate in sign language for students identified to require such services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 accommodation plan in order to access academic instruction. This does not in any way restrict the provisions of R7-2-401(B)(14) which defines "interpreter" and provides that each student's IEP team determines the level of interpreter skill necessary for the provision of FAPE, nor does it restrict a school district's ability to develop a job description for someone in a position of "educational interpreter" that requires additional job responsibilities.
2. "Accommodation plan developed to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC 794, et.seq. ("504 accommodation plan")." For the purposes of this Section, "504 accommodation plan" means a plan developed for the purpose of specifying accommodations and/or services that will be implemented by classroom teachers and other school personnel so that students will benefit from their educational program.

*Continued on Page 2*

Please pass this on to your educational interpreter!

**B. Educational Interpreters for the Hearing Impaired**

1. Persons employed by or contracting with schools and school districts to provide educational interpreting services for hearing impaired students must meet the following qualifications from and after January 1, 2005:
  - a. Have a high school diploma or GED;
  - b. Hold a valid fingerprint clearance card, and
  - c. Show proficiency in interpreting skills through one of the following:
    - 1) A minimum passing score of 3.5 or higher on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), or
    - 2) Hold a valid Certificate of Interpretation (CI) and/or Certificate of Transliteration (CT) from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), or
    - 3) Hold a valid certificate from the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) at level 3 or higher.
2. If a public education agency (PEA) is unable to find an individual meeting the above qualifications, the PEA may hire an individual with lesser qualifications, but the PEA is required to provide a professional development plan for the individual they

employ to provide educational interpreting services. This professional development plan must include the following:

- a. Proof of at least twenty-four hours of training in interpreting each year that a valid certification is not held or EIPA passing score is not attained, and
  - b. Documentation of a plan for the individual to meet the required qualifications within three years of employment. If the qualifications are not attained within three years, but progress toward attainment is demonstrated, the plan shall be modified to include an intensive program for up to one year to meet the provisions of section (B)(1) of these rules.
3. An individual employed under the provisions of subsection 2 of this rule must also have the following
    - a. A valid fingerprint clearance card, and
    - b. A high school diploma or GED
    - c. Compliance with these rules will be reviewed at the same time as a PEA is monitored for compliance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. 1400, et.seq.

## **National Interpreter Certification Written Exam**

Nearly 50 Arizona interpreters took the first offering of the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) written exam, free of charge, on June 5<sup>th</sup>. This accounted for nearly 20% of all NIC tests administered nationwide – a noteworthy achievement.

Qualified Arizona residents who register with the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) may take the pencil-and-paper option, at no cost, on December 4<sup>th</sup>. For information, contact Rob Voreck at [rob.voreck@acdhh.state.az.us](mailto:rob.voreck@acdhh.state.az.us). Applications, test outline, and the much-anticipated suggested reading list may be found at [www.rid.org/nic.html](http://www.rid.org/nic.html). Most of the suggested reading materials can be borrowed from ACDHH. Form a study group and start studying now. This is the first step toward achieving national certification.

The performance test is yet to be finalized, but completion is anticipated by the summer of 2005.

# Consecutive Interpreting Scores Big

By Christina Calder

For most educational interpreters today, simultaneous interpreting for the deaf is “where it’s at,” even though it is widely known that consecutive interpreting has the potential of producing a more accurate product. Perhaps the reason for this is that people generally judge an interpreter’s skill by his or her ability to keep up with the speaker. In an effort to appear “good” to others, we interpreters tend to stick to simultaneous interpreting, gaining experience and increasing our comfort levels. As a result, we allow our skills in consecutive interpreting to atrophy like a muscle seldom used. This is unfortunate, as a recent experience clearly pointed out to me.

First let me say that background knowledge of the topic and a strong interpreter team is critical to success at achieving every interpreter’s primary goal: delivering a clear and accurate message. Sometimes, however, this is not enough. We all know how many times we leave at the end of the day feeling inadequate; that we failed to meet the needs of the students assigned to us. The pressure of trying to keep up with the speaker seems to weigh down our shoulders like a sack of cement. “How,” we ask ourselves, “can we effectively interpret when the many dynamics involved in the classroom often seem to work against us?” For me, the answer came in a surprising way one day last year.

Just as for many previous months, I stood that day in the classroom within sight of my student. I had prepared as well as possible for the highly technical subject but still felt lost in a sea of confusion. Specialized jargon seemed to shoot from the instructor’s mouth at the speed of light. I understood the meaning of the individual words, but it took time for me to present them coherently. My hands formed signs faster and faster. I felt like a wind-up doll out of control, knowing I was losing accuracy. Then disaster struck—I lost the thread of what the instructor was saying.

Choking back my panic, I sought help from my team member. Her puzzled face told me she, too, struggled to understand what the instructor was trying to convey. Then, suddenly, he was off on a completely

new thought, leaving me behind in a maze of words.

Taking deep breaths to slow my racing heart, I dropped my hands to my sides. When I captured my student’s anxious eyes I couldn’t help wondering if he thought his conduit to the wonderful world of technology had just snapped. The teacher trained a sharp stare on my unmoving hands as though willing me to catch up, but he didn’t slow his pace. I cleared my mind to keep it from shutting down completely like an overheated engine and simply listened, striving to get a grip on the instructor’s words.

Then suddenly, there it was—I caught the concept and signed to my student. Again I stopped, listening until I understood before communicating. Although at first I felt uncomfortable because the volume of signs nowhere near equaled the volume of words hurled at me, I stuck with the consecutive interpreting mode. I knew that right then, it was the only way I could handle the information coming at me. As I realized that what I was putting out felt more precise, my anxiety eased. My student’s clear gaze and nods showed me he understood. I let out a satisfied sigh and kept going. Later that day, I left with a smile on my face, knowing I had fulfilled my primary purpose: I delivered a lucid and accurate message.

Even today I’m not completely comfortable with consecutive interpreting, but I recognize that it is sometimes the best option. No longer am I locked into simultaneous interpreting. The more experience I gain using consecutive interpreting, the more comfortable I become. I would encourage all educational interpreters to give it a try. Hopefully, this valuable, but neglected, tool will help others shed the frustration of trying to “keep up,” as it has for me.

*A former educational interpreter for Phoenix Day School for the Deaf, Christina Calder holds an associates degree in interpreting from Phoenix College. She will be joining the ASDB Southeast Regional Cooperative part time as she pursues her Bachelor Degree for the Educational Interpreter at the University of Arizona.*

# House Bill 2495 Signed into Law

## *Bill Allows Partnerships to Ensure Quality Interpreter Training Programs*

Responding to the severe shortage of interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing statewide, Governor Janet Napolitano signed House Bill 2495 into law, paving the way for the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) to work with colleges and universities in ensuring quality interpreter training.

Currently, nationally certified interpreters number less than 100 in Arizona, below national standards. With the number of deaf and hard of hearing people swelling in recent years to approximately 450,000 due to increasing general population growth in Arizona, the shortage of interpreters presents a crisis for those with hearing loss. Often, interpreters are the only communication link that the deaf and severely hard of hearing have to the community.

Sherri Collins, executive director of the ACDHH says the endorsement of HB 2495 by the legislature and Governor will alleviate this shortage in the future. "This legislation allows our agency to partner with colleges and universities to make sure interpreters are adequately prepared," said Collins. "The role of an interpreter affects every part of life for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, and a qualified interpreter can make a significant difference in education, legal, medical and general settings."

ACDHH, a state agency mandated with licensing all interpreters in the

state by 2007, has testified before the House and Senate on HB 2495. This bill, sponsored by Representative Mark Thompson (R-Tempe), allows the commission to work in partnership with universities and colleges to develop training programs. The funding comes from the commission's own Telecommunications Fund for the Deaf, which is collected from an excise tax on telephone exchange carriers.

Special thanks to all who wrote to your legislators or testified on behalf of this bill!

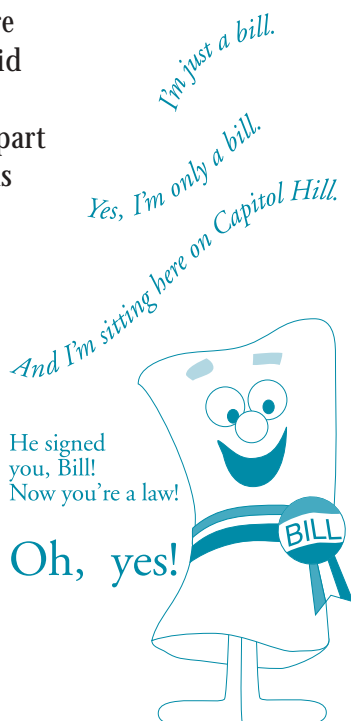


## ACDHH Interpreter Training and Development Plan Available Online

As a result of the passage of HB 2495, the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) now has \$750,000 in funding available for colleges and universities. Feedback from the interpreting community is critical to ensuring that the commission supports the most effective programs in interpreter training and development in all areas—from initial ASL instruction to continuing education for the veteran interpreter.

The following link leads to a draft of programs under consideration for funding. Keep in mind that this draft serves only as a general framework. [http://www.acdhh.org/interpreter\\_development.asp](http://www.acdhh.org/interpreter_development.asp).

Please review the list of programs and send comments to Rob Voreck at [rob.voreck@acdhh.state.az.us](mailto:rob.voreck@acdhh.state.az.us).





# A New Take On The Situation

## *Peer Note Takers in the Classroom*

By Marie Blankenship

For a student who is deaf or hard of hearing (HH), using an interpreter to access classroom instruction or interaction can be of tremendous benefit, but the challenge of classroom learning doesn't end there. Many times, students are expected to take notes during a lecture. The deaf/HH student's need to keep his or her eyes on the interpreter makes it difficult to take notes as well. This is where a peer note taker can be especially valuable.

Instructors can appoint someone they feel capable of doing the job. Or they can ask for a volunteer, which is easy to find in most classrooms. Carbonless paper is readily available, which allows the note taker to keep the top copy and give the second copy to the student in need. Another option is to photocopy the original page of notes.

Is it worth the effort? "It's a lot easier because otherwise I have to write and I can't watch the interpreter and I miss a lot of information," reported one of Marie's former students. "This way, I can watch in class, take the notes home, and get it all."

One alternative to a peer note taker is to ask the teacher to pause frequently to allow time for the

student to watch and then write. Of course, this tends to disrupt the flow of the lecture and holds the rest of the class back. But if neither of these accommodations are made, the deaf/HH student will get what he or she can and miss quite a bit of information, especially if the instructor uses overhead or board illustrations.

One innovative teacher solved the board illustration problem nicely. Even though the peer note taker took good lecture notes, for some reason, she did not consider the illustrations important enough to copy down. In this instance, the illustrations were critical to understanding the concept. The teacher used his digital camera to take a picture of the board, connected it to his computer, and printed off a copy for Marie's student. Ingenious solution!

When asked about utilizing a note taker in her classroom, another teacher said, "It's wonderful. It frees up the student to really concentrate on what is being said, and later she can read the notes and reinforce what she learned."

*Marie Blankenship is an educational interpreter for ASDB/Desert Valley Region. She has recently moved from a West Phoenix high school to a middle school.*



## Do you want your own copy of interpretations?

Download at [www.ade.az.gov/ess-cspd](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess-cspd)

# I am Proud...

By Janel Gillen

My experience, as limited as it may be, has led me to realize that few people truly understand interpreting as a profession. Frequently I hear, “Oh, that’s so nice of you,” or, “How fulfilling it must be to help teach those deaf kids.” Let me clarify a few things for those who see interpreters in the same light.

- o I am proud to be in the profession of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting. This isn’t because I have chosen to help “those poor deaf people” but because of the high standards of the profession. ASL interpreters continually strive to improve our skills and the service we provide while at the same time educate those with whom we interact day-by-day.
- o I am proud of the knowledge I have gained because it enables me to educate doctors, lawyers, teachers, grocery store employees, students and realtors—and any other interested parties—about deafness and the interpreters who work with the deaf. I can lead people to a new understanding of the deaf community and a more open-minded approach to interactions with deaf individuals.
- o I am proud to be part of an educational movement spanning the United States that enlightens others as to why ASL is a true language and the uniqueness therein.

- o I am proud to be an ASL interpreter because, as such, I am a resource for deaf individuals to access dialogue and other forms of communication, information, and education in a manner comfortable to them.
- o I am proud to be in this profession because I never stop learning about the distinctiveness of each person and their individual preferences and needs. As an interpreter, I find creative ways to fulfill those preferences and needs, enhancing my own abilities along the way.
- o I am proud to be an ASL interpreter because of the cognitive challenges I conquer every day to put out successful interpretations.

The profession of ASL interpreting teams up with the deaf community to maximize the efforts of deaf individuals, allowing each person the opportunity to rise to his or her true potential. Interpreting is a valued and valuable profession. I am proud because that is who I am.

*Janel Gillen is an educational interpreter for ASDB/Southeastern Regional Cooperative in Tucson. She has obtained her EIPA 4.7 rating.*

# Assessment System for K-12 Educational Interpreters (ASK 12)

For the past two years, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has funded participation in the Regional Assessment System (RAS) in anticipation of the qualification requirements recently established in Arizona for educational interpreters. The RAS is a partnership of 11 western states and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which provides educational interpreters the opportunity to evaluate their skills and knowledge using the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA).

During the two years of the RAS, Arizona offered five evaluation opportunities. The RAS director and the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB) interpreter trainers proctored these evaluations at sites in Phoenix and Tucson. A total of 79 evaluations were completed for educational interpreters statewide.

Some interpreters have taken the EIPA more than once. Arizona ranks second in the RAS for the number of evaluations completed. The average EIPA score for those evaluated was 3.4. Arizona ties with Alaska for ranking second in the RAS for EIPA average scores. The highest percentages of interpreters preferred the Elementary Pidgin Signed English or the Secondary Pidgin Signed English version of the EIPA. No interpreters chose to take the Secondary Manually Coded English (SEE II) version. Of those evaluations actually selected, the Elementary Manually Coded English version (SEE II) was the least popular.

So, what does the future hold for the RAS? The answer is that it is quickly expanding as other states realize the benefits and successes achieved. As a result, the program is undergoing a name change to Assessment System for K-12 Educational Interpreters (ASK 12). The ADE has opted to continue participation in the program. In Arizona, at least two evaluation opportunities will be held per year, the first expected to take place some time in October. Interpreters can also choose to take the evaluation in neighboring states. Consider the benefits of the program:

1. Makes the best use of limited resources for low-incidence professional development needs
2. Provides state-specific and collective data to make staff professional development decisions
3. Maximizes states' limited fiscal and personnel resources
4. Develops an evidence-based assessment system
5. Offers portability for interpreters to move between states
6. Assessment is specific to the K-12 environment

Along with the new name and new system, a new web site is planned. Continue to check [www.jccc.net/ras](http://www.jccc.net/ras) for updates on information and schedules during the transition.



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## RID Performance Testing Available

ACDHH is restructuring its facilities in order to enhance the provision of their services. With that, Rob Voreck's Licensing and Certification unit will relocate to the basement offices of 1400 West Washington. This move will allow them to offer RID performance testing on a "by appointment" basis in addition to the regularly scheduled monthly testing. By-appointment testing should be available by mid-August.

**interpretations** is a newsletter...

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